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**To:** Eoc, Epahq [Eoc.Epahq@epa.gov]  
**Subject:** EOC Spot Report: Region 6, Explosion at TPC Group Facility in Port Neches, TX - Update #4

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## **EOC Spot Report: Region 6, Explosion at TPC Group Facility in Port Neches, TX - Update #4**

**PORT NECHES, TX, NRC#1264987**

**US Environmental Protection Agency**  
**Report as of 11/29/2019 9:26 AM**

**Overview:** Early in the morning on November 27, the National Response Center received a report about an explosion at TPC Group Facility in Port Neches, TX. The facility is regulated under the Risk Management Program. The explosion was felt for miles around, damaging homes and shops in the area.

At approximately 1400 CST on November 27, a secondary explosion occurred. Residents within a four-mile radius of the facility have been ordered to evacuate. The on-site wastewater treatment plant is still without power. TPC is currently in the process of connecting generators on-site to power the pumps and transport the firefighting water from the storage ponds to the treatment plant.

As of 0700 on November 29, the fire continues to burn. Currently there are nine fires burning, 3 of which are being actively fed. The facility has been working a block isolation plan to address the fires which has been successful in slowing down some of the fires. To prevent releases of fuel or vapors, the facility is not extinguishing fires where gas is actively leaking.

On November 28, 2019, a sheen was observed in the "201 Canal," into which firefighter water had previously discharged. Four drum skimmers, hard boom, sorbents, and trash pumps have been deployed to remediate the sheen. TPC brought in Clean Harbors and Resolute as their Oil Spill Removal Organization (OSRO) contractor rather than as an Incident Management Team as was stated in the previous update. The OSRO has deployed 4 drum skimmers, hard boom, sorbents, and trash pumps to remediate the sheen.

Perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and Perfluorooctanoate acid (PFOA) currently do not appear to pose a significant threat since only four totes of foaming product were used during firefighting operations in comparison to the amount of water that was used. EPA, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), and TPC teams have been conducting air monitoring throughout the evacuation zone. The compounds being monitored for include; 1,3 butadiene, benzene, VOCs, Carbon Monoxide, Oxygen, Hydrogen Sulfide, Lower Explosive Limit and particulates. TCEQ and EPA air monitoring readings in the last operational period were below action levels. TPC air monitoring teams have been reporting readings below the action levels for VOCs and butadiene.

**State, Local and other Federal Agency Actions:** The Occupational Safety and Health Administration, United States Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Civil Support Team are responding. In addition to TCEQ, many local and state departments are on site, including the Jefferson County Judge's Office, Port Neches Police Department, Texas Department of Emergency Management, Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, Port Neches Fire Department, the Golden Triangle Incident Management Team, and the Jefferson County Office of Emergency Management.

**EPA Actions:** EPA is serving as the lead federal agency for response efforts. As of 7:00 CST, November 29, EPA has deployed 3 personnel and 9 contractors to Port Neches, and 3 EPA personnel 3 contractors are supporting the response from Dallas. EPA's Airborne Spectral Photometric Environmental Collection Technology (ASPECT) aircraft conducted three flights on November 27. ASPECT did not conduct monitoring due to a low cloud ceiling November 28, but will attempt to conduct monitoring again on November 29. An EPA OSC will work with Public Information staff to make response activities and sampling results available to the public on the site. Information is being provided to the Region 6 Office of Communities, Tribes and Environmental Assessment for dissemination to environmental justice contacts in the area.

EPA has received an air monitoring plan and an air, water and soil/sediment sampling plan from TPC for review. These are being reviewed by Environmental Unit staff. EPA has requested environmental sampling and monitoring data from all Unified Command partners. This data will be shared with ATSDR for the purposes of a health consultation.

A Story Map has been created for the incident and is public at the <https://response.epa.gov/south4groupfire> website.

**Media Interest:** High

**Media Links:**

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/11/27/us/port-neches-plant-explosion/index.html>

<https://www.khou.com/article/news/explosions-rock-tpc-group-plant-in-port-neches-3-injured/285-61fc323e-90af-4b90-aec3-fd55dbe859a5>

<https://kfdm.com/news/local/tpc-update-on-fire-and-follow-up-at-port-neches-plant>

<https://www.beaumontenterprise.com/news/article/SE-Texas-chemical-plant-fire-continues-14868966.php>

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/11/28/us/texas-plant-explosions-thursday-evacuations/index.html>

**The EPA will continue to monitor and provide updates as needed**

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